

PARK & RECREATION

Park and Recreation exists to provide a cost-effective system of safe and attractive parks and recreation land, facilities and programs that enhance the beautification of the City; provide for the leisure time pursuits of all Wichita residents and visitors; and promote appreciation of the City's environmental resources.



Overview

The Park and Recreation Department provides recreational opportunities, maintains landscaping at City parks, facilities, and along right-of-ways, and operates a number of cultural and performing arts facilities. The department supports over 4,100 acres of parks and greenways, ten recreation centers, twelve swimming pools, an art center, and numerous youth-based activities and athletics programs.



Landscape crews maintain over 35 acres in downtown Wichita, including the historic Naftzger Memorial Park.

Various divisions perform the operations of the department.

- Administration
- Forestry & Central Support
- Parks & Recreation
- Botanica
- CityArts
- Century II
- Expo Hall
- Historical Museum
- Wichita Boathouse

Administration is responsible for the leadership, management and direction of the department. The division provides, among other duties, financial planning and reporting, budgeting, payroll support and capital project initiation and development. Forestry & Central Support is charged with carrying out a comprehensive tree planting, maintenance, and removal program. The Division also maintains plumbing, electrical, and other maintenance aspects of park facilities. The Parks and Recreation Division provides basic maintenance and support to the City's 90 parks and athletic fields. All recreational programming, from adult sports to the youth-targeted Summer of Discovery program, is coordinated and administered within this division.

Botanica, Century II, Expo Hall, CityArts, the Historical Museum, and the Wichita Boathouse are all divisions of the Park Department. Century II and Expo Hall provide an attractive venue for entertainment and conventions. Botanica is a beautiful botanical garden located in Sim Park, near the Arkansas River. The Boathouse is a popular meeting and reception facility. Educational opportunities in the respective fields of Wichita/Sedgwick County history are provided through the Historical Museum.

The Park and Recreation Department is funded entirely from the General Fund. However, the costs of five divisions: Park and Recreation, CityArts, Century II, Expo Hall, and the Wichita Boathouse are partially offset by revenue derived from rentals, reimbursements, and fees. In 2002, these revenues are budgeted to total \$5 million, or nearly one third of Park expenditures.



Finance and Operations

The 2002 Proposed budget for Park provides over \$16 million from the General Fund and reflects a new organizational structure implemented in 2000. The new structure streamlines maintenance activities into recreation related maintenance or greenway and open space maintenance, a move that is projected to enhance responsiveness and efficiency. The proposed budget also provides a turf specialist position to accommodate the increasing need for high-level soccer and softball field management and maintenance services at South Lakes and Northeast Sports Complexes.

The Forestry and Central Support Division is responsible for a variety of functions, including tree planting, tree trimming, reforestation, and other electrical, plumbing, mechanical, and construction services.

The core function of Forestry and Central Support remains the pruning and removal of trees located in public areas. Annually, around 10,000 trees are pruned using a systematic neighborhood pruning method. The Division is also responsible for removing dead or diseased trees. During severe storms, staff are tasked with assisting in debris removal, particularly tree debris. In 2000, due to several severe storms, over 1,600 tons of wood waste debris was removed from City right-of-ways.

The City engages in an aggressive reforestation effort, spearheaded by this Division. Annually, 2,300 trees are planted along thoroughfares, in parks, in public areas, and in easements. In each year since 1986, these efforts have helped Wichita earn the designation of iTree City, USA.

The City has invested heavily in landscaping freeway corridors, including West Kellogg, K-96 in Northeast Wichita, and Kellogg and Oliver in East Wichita. The areas include plantings and trees that are maintained by this division.



Utilizing the best technology available, Forestry crews prune or remove nearly 12,900 trees annually.

Selected Performance Measures				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Trees planted	2,241	2,375	2,500	2,500
Trees pruned	9,969	10,431	17,000	17,000
Trees removed	3,287	2,375	2,000	2,000

leisure opportunities for residents by maintaining almost 100 parks totaling over 4,100 acres. This Division performs right-of- way mowing and maintenance activities and has the responsibility of maintaining the downtown area, including Old Town, the Douglas Streetscape, the East Bank area, and the Museum District. Staff maintain a variety of statues, monuments, and memorials located on Park grounds. Due to Wichita's recent growth, the need for increased maintenance and care for public right-

Parks and Recreation, the Department's largest division, operates ten neighborhood recreation centers, twelve swimming pools, two developing sports complexes, and offers a variety of athletic programs and leagues for youth and adults. The Division enhances

of-way and medians in newly annexed as well as existing municipal areas has created the need for two additional maintenance crews in the 2002 Proposed Budget.



Selected Performance Measures				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Cost recovery ñ recreation centers	28.00%	29.00%	29.50%	30.00%
Cost recovery ñ swimming pools	54.40%	47.40%	53.30%	54.30%

The Park and Recreation Division budget is over \$10 million in 2002, with costs partially offset by user fees and rentals. In 2002, revenues are projected to total \$1.9 million. Cost recovery of recreational activities varies with the type of activity. Swimming pools have recovered around

50 percent of their direct costs, while recreation centers have recovered only 29 percent of direct costs.

In addition to over 4,100 acres of parkland, there are 72 playground areas in neighborhood parks. The Park and Recreation Division inspects and maintains the playground equipment to ensure public safety. To facilitate the removal of old, unsafe equipment and its replacement with new, safer equipment that meets current national safety standards, a \$1 million playground improvement plan is currently underway. Staff is also charged with maintaining signs, fencing, picnic tables, drinking and decorative fountains and a variety of other items in and around the City's parks and recreational facilities. Finally, Division staff maintains the City's network of over 38 miles of bike paths and jogging trails.

Recreation staff provides athletic programs year round in a variety of sports. Outdoor sports, including baseball, softball, soccer and football, are offered at many different well maintained facilities, including the new South Lakes and Northeast Sports Complexes, West Side Athletic Field, Planeview Park and others. Staff is responsible for organizing over 90 leagues, with over 200 teams annually, collecting fees, scheduling games, and maintaining the fields. In the near future, leagues will be scheduled at the developing Northeast Sports Complex, enhancing league activities for Wichitans.



Youth enjoying a soccer game at South Lakes Park, one of the over 90 sports fields maintained by Recreation staff.

The Park and Recreation Division manage and operate Summer of Discovery, a ten-week summer program for children ages 6 to 12. The licensed program is available to all children, regardless of income, with enrollment fees charged on an ability-to-pay basis. In 2000, over one thousand children enjoyed educational and entertaining activities such as boating and water safety, science and nature, sports camps, magic shows, movies, swimming and more.

Additional programming is provided through ten community recreation centers. The facilities

host a variety of classes for all ages, including gymnastics, aerobics, dance, cooking, judo and others. In addition, the recreational facilities offer rooms to rent for meetings or parties.



At the 119-acre Watson Park in south Wichita, paddle boating, fishing, pony rides, train tours, miniature golf, and concessions are all available. Near the downtown area, the recently renovated Ralph Wulz Riverside Tennis Center offers fourteen lighted tennis courts on a year-round basis. Lessons are available from an on-site tennis professional, and the Center's pro shop maintains a large supply of racquets, balls, and other supplies. A BMX bike track is located in Emery Park in south Wichita, while a bridle path for equestrians is available at Pawnee Prairie Park in west Wichita. Herman Hill and Oak Park each contain a disk golf course.

During the summer, the Division operates 12 swimming pools located throughout the City. The pools offer reasonably priced recreational swimming and swimming lessons. Swim teams formed at each pool are also popular activities for youth, as the teams practice and ultimately compete annually in a citywide swim meet.



McAdams Pool is one of twelve revenue-generating swimming pools operated by Park and Recreation every summer.

The Department contributes four staff to the Great Plains Nature Center, a modern, interactive educational facility staffed by local, state and federal personnel. The facility, located at the 282 acre Chisholm Creek Park in north Wichita, serves as the base for the iWichita Wildi program, providing citizens with opportunities to experience wildlife and to learn about native plants and animals. Nature trails and wildlife viewing areas are both available at the park.

The City also participates in a partnership to support Botanica, the Wichita Gardens. Dedicated in 1987, Botanica is a partnership between the City of Wichita and Botanica, Inc. The City provides an annual operating subsidy of \$250,000 for salary support and basic insurance coverage, and provides building maintenance support. The privately incorporated Botanica, Inc, provides additional operating funding and coordinates volunteer support. Botanica is the premier botanical garden in the Great Plains region; visitors can view over 300 varieties of roses in the rose garden, as well as many different plants and flowers both native to Kansas and new to the area throughout the many gardens.

Attendance at Botanica is on the rise, with 135,000 paid visitors in 2000, a seven percent increase from

Selected Performance Measures - Botanica				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
Annual visitors	126,000	135,000	142,500	135,000
Private dollars raised	\$669,000	\$760,500	\$800,000	\$837,500

1999. Botanica is located in the heart of Wichita's Museum District and is adjacent to many parks and public areas, which are the responsibility of the Park Department to maintain.

CityArts is the City's cultural arts center. Opened to the public in 1998, CityArts provides art classes for all ages at its downtown location on the East Bank. The primary emphasis is engaging beginners and children in the arts. CityArts offers classes in pottery, sculpture, silversmithing, woodworking, painting, weaving, and other arts. CityArts also has the responsibility for overseeing the care and maintenance of public art and sculptures, an activity for which \$60,000 has been included in the proposed budget.

The Century II/Expo Hall complex in the East Bank area is Wichita's premier venue for entertainment, conventions, trade shows, and meetings. In 2000, the venue hosted twenty state conventions, eight regional/national conventions, and four trade shows. Century II/Expo Hall management saw 734,255 people pass through the doors for



Selected Performance Measures - Century II/Expo Hall				
	1999	2000	2001	2002
State conventions hosted	35	20	35	35
Attendance at state conventions hosted	48,585	42,045	55,000	55,000
Event days hosted for state conventions	60	52	65	65

various consumer shows, cultural events, entertainment events, and meetings.

The Wichita Boathouse, donated to the City in 1998, offers meeting, banquet, and reception facilities for rent. The

facility is typically booked at least six months in advance, and in 2000, generated over \$96,000 in revenue. The Boathouse grounds feature a replica of an America's Cup-winning sailboat.

The Wichita Boathouse is home to the City's Visitor Information Center and continues to be popular with both out-of-town visitors and Wichitans, hosting a wide array of meetings, banquets, and receptions. Highly utilized for wedding receptions, the venue has also hosted international gatherings of corporate executives. Upgrades to the catering kitchen have facilitated growth in banquet and reception business.



Park and Recreation operates several premier meeting and banquet facilities, including the Wichita Boathouse.

The Wichita/Sedgwick County Historical Museum, located in the old Wichita City Hall, provides documentation of life in Wichita as it has developed over the decades. City funding provides a portion of the salary and benefits for the museum's director, along with insurance and utilities. Private funding provides additional resources for housing the collection.

<i>Park and Recreation Budget Summary</i>					
	2000 Actual	2001 Adopted	2001 Revised	2002 Adopted	2003 Approved
Personal Services	10,096,459	10,892,150	10,884,420	11,579,850	11,922,230
Contractual Services	3,490,768	3,439,850	3,749,830	3,730,280	3,761,650
Commodities	699,626	763,430	732,490	682,520	680,550
Capital Outlay	109,910	91,120	259,850	63,760	65,370
Other	139,915	193,500	472,720	422,720	422,720
Total Park and Recreation Expenditures	14,536,678	15,380,050	16,099,310	16,479,130	16,852,520
Total full-time positions	217	217	222	222	222
Total part-time positions	666	669	669	669	669
Total FTE positions	389.25	389	394	394	394